



DUEY STROEBEL

STATE SENATOR • 20TH DISTRICT

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Stroebel Unveils Reforms to Academic Excellence Higher Education Scholarship *Measure targets Wisconsin's "brain drain"*

Madison, WI – Senator Duey Stroebel (R-Cedarburg) unveiled legislation today with Representative Dan Knodl (R-Germantown) reforming the Academic Excellence Higher Education Scholarship program for Wisconsin's top high school graduates.

Currently offering \$2,250 in tuition and fees, the program is Wisconsin's sole strictly merit based program for recipients graduating at or near the top of the class. By increasing the cash award and incorporating tax credits, Senator Stroebel's reforms would ultimately increase the award to full tuition to any UW-System school or up to the cost of UW-Madison at an in-state private college or university.

Following college graduation, half of the award will be given as tax credits. The five year tax credits would offset Wisconsin income tax liability provided the student remains in state and makes a majority of income here.

"This reform addresses Wisconsin's 'brain drain' problem," said Senator Stroebel. "Under the current program, many award recipients decline their scholarship and according to a 2013 survey of recipients, less than half said the current program actually influenced their decision to attend a Wisconsin school. With a full tuition award, Wisconsin's best and brightest will see a greater incentive to utilize the great colleges and universities – both public and private – within our state."

The senator added, "With the tax credit following college graduation, we are encouraging students to plant roots in Wisconsin with long term employment. The tax credit will offset income tax liability for five years. This reform will ensure the Academic Excellence Higher Education Scholarship is meaningful to our best and brightest high school graduates."

According to UW-Madison College of Business professor Morris Davis, Wisconsin lost 14,000 college graduates per year between 2008 and 2012. Almost half of those leaving were between the ages of 21 and 24, who recently obtained degrees.

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Senator Duey Stroebel represents the 20th Senate District which includes parts of Ozaukee, Washington, Fond du Lac, Calumet and Sheboygan Counties. He lives in Cedarburg with his wife Laura and eight children.